

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. The appearance of impropriety is obvious when a corporation forces its stations to play a one-sided documentary with a probable impact on shaping the viewers' opinions regarding politics, with no apparent plans to provide viewers a different viewpoint. Either Sinclair should withdraw its order to force the anti-Kerry documentary to be shown, or it should be required to also show the "Going Upriver" documentary in order that there be some balancing of the viewpoints shown by Sinclair.

Thank you.